

Director's Welcome

Welcome to the new quarterly Steps E-Newsletter—our way of keeping you informed of the latest program updates, community and partnership activities, upcoming events, and other useful information.

As the Acting Director for CDC's Steps Program, I look forward to working with each of you as we move into year three of the Steps Cooperative Agreement Program. Since joining the Steps Program Office in 2004, I've worked closely with many of you as Deputy Director and am excited about continuing and expanding our relationships in my new role.

This year, the Steps Program Office has not only experienced a growth spurt and welcomed several new staff members, but also said goodbye to our Program Director, Stephanie Zaza, MD (see photo at right). As you read through this newsletter, you will see that our staff has been busy focusing on several priority projects, including designing a new Steps Web site and planning the upcoming Steps Cooperative Agreement Workshop, set for June 27–29 in Atlanta. We also are exploring new ways to share success stories from our communities and partners and to highlight proven interventions that address chronic disease prevention and promote healthy living.

You—our grantees and partners—are leading the nation in supporting community initiatives that encourage Americans to make healthy lifestyle choices. As always, the Steps Program Office is here to help you monitor progress and improve programs through training and technical assistance. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns. We also invite you to submit to our newsletter editor any news, success stories, or program information you would like to share in future editions.

Again, I applaud your work and am confident that, with your help, the Steps Program is helping to reduce the burden of chronic diseases and create a nation in which people live long, healthy lives.

Alyssa Easton, PhD, MPH
Acting Director

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The Steps Program Office recently held a farewell celebration for Stephanie Zaza, MD, MPH, who departed the office on April 1 for a new role as the Strategy and Innovation Officer for CDC's Coordinating Office for Terrorism Preparedness and Emergency Response. Dr Zaza's leadership and expertise have been invaluable to the Steps Program. Best wishes Stephanie—we will miss you!

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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Steps Updates

“The Workshop presentations will help our grantees and partners provide the most effective Steps interventions in their communities, and the sessions will provide our grantees a platform to highlight their activities.”

***Nancy Williams
Steps Program Office***

Fourth Annual Steps Cooperative Agreement Workshop

It's that time of year again! The fourth annual Steps Cooperative Agreement Workshop is set for June 27–29, 2006, at the Sheraton Buckhead Hotel in Atlanta, Ga. The three-day event will highlight the work of the collaboration between the Steps grantees, Steps Program Office, CDC division liaisons, and Steps community and national partners.

More than 300 participants—including representatives from all levels of government (local, state, federal, and tribal) and private-sector partners—are expected to attend the Workshop, according to Nancy Williams, MSPH, Acting Team Lead for the Steps Program Consultant Team. “Everyone involved in the Steps Program brings unique skills, expertise, and contributions to the table, and the Workshop is expected to be a dynamic event,” said Ms. Williams.

More than 100 abstracts were submitted for the Workshop, which will be organized around four main sectors—community, schools, health care, and work sites. The Workshop will include multiple opportunities for grantees and partners (internal and external) to share success stories, lessons learned, and challenges in implementing Steps activities. The overall goals are for participants to:

- Present program successes and challenges in implementing evidence-based initiatives, systems change, and policy initiatives that address overweight and obesity, diabetes, tobacco control, and asthma on a community level.
- Share information on activities related to program development and implementation efforts, with a particular focus on integration, policy, sustainability, evidence-based decision making, health disparities, and the built environment.
- Participate in skills-building, information-sharing, and networking sessions.

“We are excited about this opportunity to bring everyone together, and we need the support and attendance of everyone involved in the Steps Program—from the program managers and state coordinators to the program evaluators, national and local partners, and community-level program coordinators—to truly make the event a success,” Ms. Williams said.



*Coming
Soon*

Please feel free to forward this and future Steps E-newsletters to your constituents and colleagues. If you know of individuals who would like to receive the E-newsletter directly, please send an e-mail to nccodstepsinfo@cdc.gov.

New Steps Web Site!

The new and improved Steps Web site will be launched this summer. A panel of grantees and partners is reviewing the site's content for relevance and usability. The new Web site will replace the existing one, now managed by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and can be accessed at www.cdc.gov/steps later this summer. Transitioning the management of the Web site from DHHS to CDC's Steps Program Office increases our ability to highlight more program-focused information and offers an additional tool for providing technical assistance. A pre-launch of the Web site will be held at the upcoming Cooperative Agreement Workshop where all grantees and partners will have an opportunity to visit the site and provide comments.

If you have questions about or suggestions for the Steps Web site, please contact Tracy Ingraham at tingraham@cdc.gov.





Community Success Stories

“For us, using local heroes to share their experiences has been a key to localizing Steps messages and gaining media coverage.”

*Elsa Mendoza
Program Manager*

Promoting the Steps Program Through Digital Stories...

Steps to a Healthier Salinas

Looking for new ways to highlight your community’s impact on individual lives? In California, the Steps to a Healthier Salinas program recently developed powerful digital stories featuring local residents discussing their experiences with chronic diseases and the Steps Program. The Steps to a Healthier Salinas staff uses the unique testimonials to promote their activities through multiple communications channels.

What are digital stories? They are 3- to 5-minute personal testimonials recorded with music, photos, sounds, and other images—similar to a video. Four local residents are featured in the digital stories. Their testimonials chronicle life with diabetes, asthma, and obesity and how their lives were changed through prevention activities supported by the Steps program.

The digital stories are incorporated across the program’s marketing efforts, including brochures, posters, print and newspaper advertisements, community presentations, and the Web site. Also, a local television program plans to broadcast the stories in an upcoming segment on chronic disease, and several of the participants have become spokespersons for Steps to a Healthier Salinas.

To view the digital stories, visit the program’s Web site at www.co.monterey.ca.us/health/communityhealth/steps.htm.



Community Success Stories

To submit a story idea or suggest ways to improve the Steps E-newsletter, send an e-mail to nccdodstepsinfo@cdc.gov.

Steps to a Healthier Cleveland Supports Walk-to-School Initiative

Using a collaborative approach, Steps to a Healthier Cleveland has helped boost local community support for the Cleveland Safe Routes to School initiative, which encourages children to walk to school.

As a result of the community's work, the Public Works Department followed through on several recommendations to remove tree limbs and other vegetation that blocked visibility in school zones, painted new crosswalk stripes on streets, and added crossing signals. To increase opportunities to walk, the Steps to a Healthier Cleveland community is planning bicycle and pedestrian safety programs at schools and walkability audits in communities around the schools (which will be conducted by Active Living by Design, a Steps to a Healthier Cleveland partner).

Each October, schoolchildren, parents, and community supporters across the United States participate in the annual International Walk-to-School Day event. Steps to a Healthier Cleveland developed a "Walking School Bus" tool kit that explains how to plan an event, ways to incorporate pedestrian safety exercises into school health programs, and a list of resources. Tool kits are available by contacting Jennifer Scofield at jscofield@city.cleveland.oh.us.



Students participate in the 2005 Steps to a Healthier Cleveland Walk-to-School Day event.



Partnership Spotlights

“Central to our goal of controlling the cost of health care is the promotion of wellness, fitness, and the prevention of chronic disease.”

Mike Leavitt
Secretary, DHHS

Steps Partners with Healthier Veterans

The Steps Program, through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), recently joined forces with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to combat obesity and diabetes among U.S. veterans.

Called HealthierUS Veterans, this multi-pronged collaboration aims to educate veterans about the health risks of obesity and diabetes and their underlying risk factors. Obesity and overweight are growing problems in America, and a major complication of being overweight is diabetes. According to VA statistics, U.S. veterans are more likely to be overweight or to have diabetes. While about 7% of the U.S. population has diabetes, approximately 20% of U.S. veterans receiving VA health-care benefits have this chronic disease.

“We are working to encourage Americans to adopt a healthy lifestyle and to take responsibility for making wise choices to improve their fitness,” DHHS Secretary Mike Leavitt said when unveiling the partnership. Through the alliance, VA medical centers will promote nutrition and exercise activities in Steps communities that have VA facilities and are interested in conducting collaborative projects. In May, Secretary Leavitt and the Honorable R. James Nicholson, Secretary of Veteran’s Affairs, kicked off the partnership with regional educational campaigns in Boston and Seattle. These particular sites were selected because both cities host active Steps communities as well as a weight management program operated by the VA called VA Move! Future collaborative events will be planned.

By focusing efforts on diabetes, obesity, and U.S. veterans and their families, the Steps Program and HealthierUS Veterans can reach up to one quarter of the entire U.S. population, or about 70 million people.

For more information on HealthierUS Veterans, visit www.healthierusveterans.va.gov.





Partnership Spotlights

YMCA of the USA: National Partner Supports Collaborative Projects

This year, 40 collaborative YMCA/Steps to a HealthierUS projects are being implemented in communities across the country. These projects are funded through a formal partnership between the Steps Program and the YMCA of the USA (YMCA).

Through this unique partnership, the national YMCA provides mini-grants to local YMCAs in Steps communities to help expand the reach and capacity of Steps activities. This is the second year that the YMCA has provided these funds to interested communities; 16 were funded in 2005, and an additional 24 have been funded in 2006. Communities are required to work collaboratively to identify joint projects and apply for funding. The overarching goal of the YMCA and Steps partnership is to increase community capacity to identify and promote programs that encourage people to make small behavioral changes that reduce the burden of diabetes, obesity, and asthma and their underlying risk factors of poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and tobacco use. To date, the YMCA has developed two YMCA/Steps collaborative workshops with Steps leaders, local YMCAs, YMCA state alliances, and a steering committee of the nation's premiere public health organizations.

Hats off to the YMCA for actively supporting community-driven initiatives that encourage healthy living!

For more information on the YMCA/Steps collaborative projects, visit **www.ymca.net**.



Partnership Spotlights

Ad Council Provides PSA Assistance

Steps to a HealthierUS recently partnered with the Ad Council to localize some of the “Small Step” public service announcements (PSAs) for interested Steps grantees to use in promoting local Steps activities and resources.

The Small Step campaign, launched in March 2004, touts the message that getting healthy is not impossible, especially if you take one “small step” at a time. The campaign’s PSAs, which target both adults and children, use humor to inspire overweight Americans to incorporate some suggested small steps into their hectic lives.

Although PSAs can be costly to produce, they offer an excellent opportunity to gain free publicity and news coverage. The Ad Council provided Steps grantees with three 30-second youth- and adult-focused PSAs (in English and Spanish), a CD-ROM of outdoor files that can be placed on billboards and other advertisements, and three radio announcement scripts. The Ad Council encouraged grantees to use the donated PSAs to promote their own programs and the Steps communities through local media.

Hats off to the Ad Council’s Anthony Signorelli, Campaign Director, and Donna Feiner, Senior Vice President, for continued support of the Steps Program!

To view the PSAs and find out more about the Small Step campaign, also sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, visit www.smallstep.gov.





Upcoming Events

The Steps E-Newsletter is published by the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta, Georgia. The contents are in the public domain.

Steps to a HealthierUS Web site:
www.healthierus.gov/steps

NCCDPHP Internet Web site:
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp

Upcoming Events

June 27–29:

Steps Cooperative Agreement Workshop

Sheraton Buckhead Hotel
3405 Lenox Road, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30326

Save the date for the annual Steps Cooperative Agreement Workshop. This event will be organized around four main sectors—community, schools, health care, and work sites. The workshop will provide opportunities for grantees and partners (internal and external) to share 1) success stories and challenges in implementing evidence-based initiatives and 2) lessons learned about implementation efforts, with a particular focus on integration, communications and media, sustainability, evaluation, and other core program strategies.

Other Related Events

July 13–16:

Fifth Annual Meeting of the International Society of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity

Westin Copley Place
10 Huntington Avenue
Boston, MA 02116

For more information: www.isbnpa.org/meeting.cfm

September 12–14:

National Health Promotion Conference: Innovations in Health Promotion: New Avenues for Collaboration

Hilton Atlanta
255 Courtland Street, N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30303

For more information: www.cdc.gov/cochp/conference/index.htm

This is the first joint conference presented by CDC's Coordinating Center for Health Promotion and its constituent groups: the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, and the Office of Genomics and Disease Prevention. The conference will provide an unprecedented opportunity to create new partnerships and strengthen existing ones to move forward with a national health promotion and wellness agenda.



Upcoming Events

Other Related Events

October 26–27:

National Prevention Summit: Prevention, Preparedness, and Promotion

**Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill
400 New Jersey Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20001**

For more information: www.healthierus.gov/steps/summit.html

The Summit will focus on disease prevention, health preparedness, and health promotion and will feature innovative programs that are making a difference in communities across the country to build a HealthierUS. Programs will focus on healthy lifestyle choices—eating a nutritious diet, being physically active, making healthy choices, and getting preventive screenings—to help prevent major health threats and burdens, including obesity, diabetes, and asthma.

There is no cost to attend the Summit. Early registration is recommended, as space is limited. There will be no on-site registration.

Steps to a HealthierUS Cooperative Agreement is a U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) program advancing the HealthierUS goal to help Americans live longer, better, and healthier lives. Through funding of community-based interventions, this program aims to reduce the burden of diabetes, obesity, and asthma, and address three related risk behaviors—poor nutrition, physical inactivity, and tobacco use and exposure. For more information, please visit www.healthierus.gov/steps.